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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

5 May 1960

#### CUBA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Castro regime, which continues to strengthen its ties with the Sino-Soviet bloc, is becoming further isolated from other Latin American governments. The estrangement between Fidel Castro and Venezuelan President Betancourt appears virtually complete; Cuban Government propaganda media have begun to attack Betancourt as they have other democratic presidents--Frondizi of Argentina, Lopez Mateos of Mexico, Lleras Camargo of Colombia, and Allensandri of Chile.

In his May Day speech, Castro derided Betancourt indirectly but unmistakably. The next day an editorial in the Castro-

controlled daily Revolucion attempted to promote a breach between Venezuelan civilian groups and the military, intimating that Betancourt is subservient to the army and to American oil companies.

A political crisis in Venezuela could develop as a result of an open rift with Castro. Disagreement over policy toward him is increasing, particularly within the government coalition. Venezuelan leftists staged a Latin American "congress of support for the Cuban revolution" in Havana on 29-30 April, and a Venezuelan civilian "militia" group marched in the Cuban May Day parade.

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PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

Page 8 of 9

PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Page 1 of 23

PART III

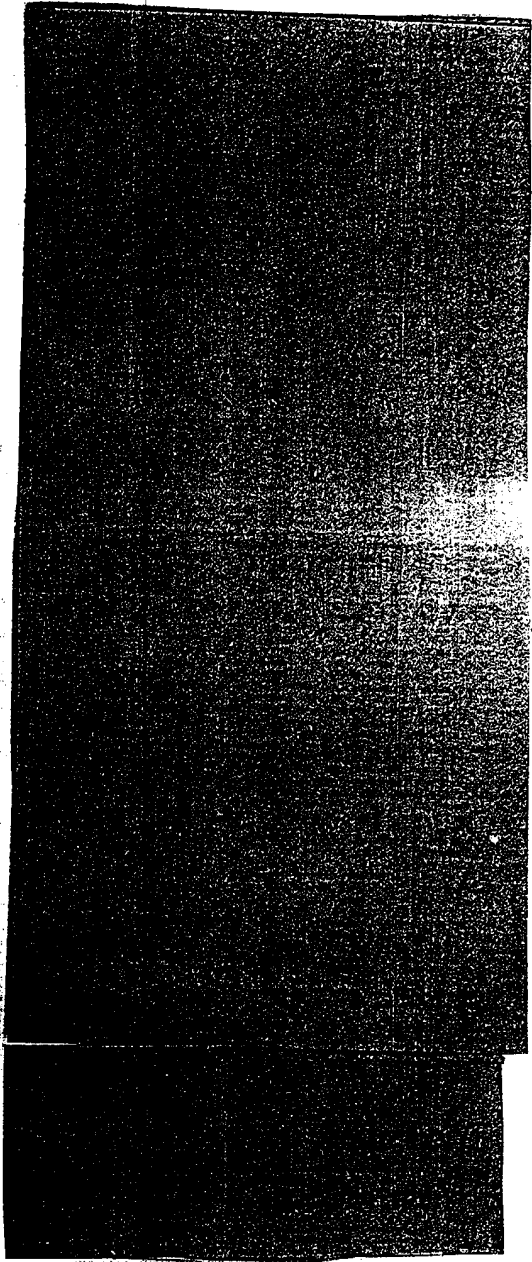
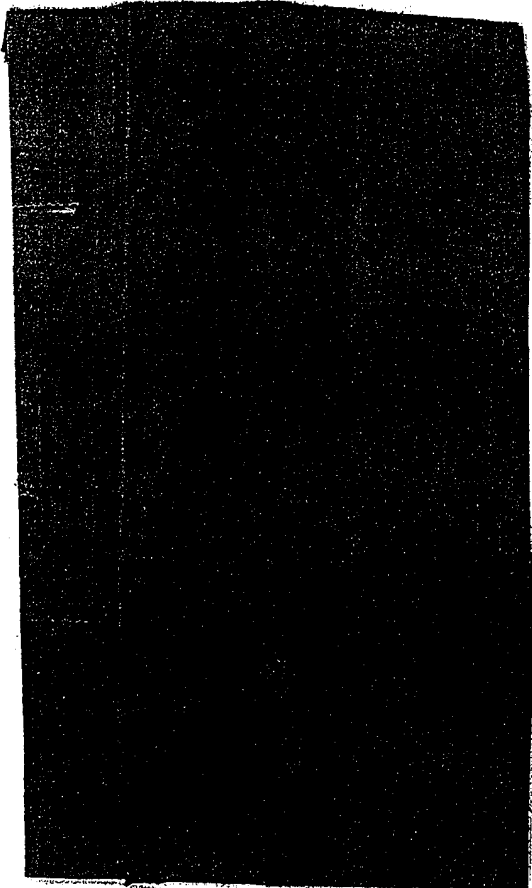
PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

Page 1 of 17

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Cuba has maintained close contacts with dissatisfied elements in Venezuela's government coalition and with Communists there, and it may be giving them financial aid and guidance. Betancourt told Ambassador Sparks on 26 April that he was completely disenchanted with Castro; he said he would be happy to play a leading role in focusing Latin American attention on the Cuban problem if Dominican dictator Trujillo were ousted first.



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PART I

OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST

Page 9 of 9

PART II

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Page 1 of 23

PART III